

Scammers Posing as the IRS

From: The Office of the Inspector General

Sent By: susan.simpson@mail.house.gov

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Dear Members, Resident Commissioner, Delegates, House Officers, Support Offices, and Staff:

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) would like to advise the House community of IRS phone scams that continue to defraud individuals across the country. There have even been reports of scammers using IRS phone scams to call and target House Offices. These scammers often demand money to pay off tax debts, threaten with legal action for taxes due on prior year tax filings, and try to defraud you by saying you are owed a tax refund to lure you into giving them banking or other private financial information. These scammers may sound very convincing when they call as they may already know some of your personal information and will have fake IRS employee ID numbers to seem legitimate. Additionally, scammers have been found to ‘spoof’ their phone number so that it looks like the IRS is calling when you look at your caller ID. The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration has received 90,000 complaints related to this IRS phone scam, and estimates that thieves have stolen an estimated \$5 million from approximately 1,100 victims.

The IRS respects taxpayer rights when working out payment of your taxes. The IRS will never do the following things that scammers will often times try. The IRS will not:

1. Call you to demand immediate payment. The IRS will never call about taxes you owe without first mailing you a bill.
2. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the chance to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
3. Require you to use a certain payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
5. Threaten to bring in local police or other law enforcement to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a suspicious phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, here is what to do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 to talk about payment options. You also may be able to set up a payment plan online at IRS.gov.
- If you know you don’t owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to TIGTA at 1.800.366.4484 or at www.tigta.gov.
- If phone scammers target you, contact the Federal Trade Commission at FTC.gov. Use their “[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)” to report the scam.

The House Office of Inspector General is available to assist with fraud prevention. For more information on fraud prevention, please visit our website at <http://oig.house.gov>. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at 202-226-1250 or via our hotline at 202-593-0068.

Sincerely,

Theresa M. Grafenstine

Inspector General